

# Early Educator Certification (EEC) Frequently Asked Questions

## For More at Four Teachers

**Who are Early Educators?** Early Educators work directly with, or on the behalf of, children ages birth to twelve in North Carolina. Our field generates \$1.77 billion annually and provides an estimated 50,000 jobs in North Carolina. An estimated 35,000 Early Educators work directly with children, facilitating learning opportunities for tens of thousands of children statewide every day.<sup>1</sup>

Early Educators...

- work in child care, public and nonpublic pre-kindergarten, school age and family child care home settings;
- direct, administer and coordinate programs that serve children ages birth to twelve and their families;
- provide on-site technical assistance to improve the quality of services;
- prepare the workforce through education at community colleges and universities, and
- provide continuing education opportunities for those working with or on the behalf of children ages birth to twelve
- support families to work productively outside the home and attend higher education programs to update their skills.
- lay the groundwork for North Carolina's economic future by guiding and facilitating young children's learning, growth and development that leads to school readiness.

North Carolina is the first in the nation to increase its workforce professional development standards by certifying the education of those who work directly with, intend to work with, and/or work on the behalf of children ages birth to twelve.

**What organization certifies Early Educators in NC?** The NC Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development (Institute), founded in 1993, is the certifying body for Early Educators in North Carolina. The mission of the Institute is to define and advocate for the implementation of a comprehensive early childhood professional development system that provides supportive, accessible, and individually appropriate education which is linked to compensation in order to ensure high quality care and education services for children and families.

To learn more about the Institute go to: [www.ncchildcare.org](http://www.ncchildcare.org)

**What is Early Educator Certification?** EEC is acknowledgement of an individual's verified level of educational achievement, based on a standardized scale. An EEC level will be assigned using the education documentation submitted and an existing scale. Information about the scale can be accessed through project staff.

**What is an EEC level?** An EEC level is a step on an Early Educator Scale that reflects the amount of education earned in the field of early childhood education (ECE), child development (CD) or related fields of study.

**How do I qualify for EEC?** If you work directly with or intend to work directly with children ages birth to twelve, you can apply for EEC. Submit an application, official college transcripts for ALL courses taken and/or degrees earned and the initial EEC fee to the Institute. Credit for professional work experience is not used to determine your EEC level.

**Does EEC provide MAF programs with required staff education documentation?** Yes, the Institute reviews applications and official transcripts to determine an EEC level for each applicant. Individual certification levels will be submitted to the Office of School Readiness (OSR) to support staff education documentation requirements and the enrollment in the teacher licensure process.

**What is the difference between EEC and North Carolina Birth-through-Kindergarten (B-K) licensure?** EEC is acknowledgement of an individual's verified level of educational achievement, based on a standardized scale. EEC does not replace the requirement for a More at Four teacher to have a B-K SP II license. North Carolina Birth-through-Kindergarten licensure is granted under the authority of the North Carolina State Board of Education to individuals who successfully complete formal education and student teaching requirements through an accredited teacher education program.

**Is certification required?** Presently Early Education Certification is voluntary for those teachers and assistants working in More at Four nonpublic schools who hold less than a B-K (Lateral, Provisional, SP I or II), or Preschool Add-on License or other state's license. If you hold B-K (Lateral, Provisional, SP I or II), or Preschool Add-on License or other state's license or you are on the TLU's waiting list, you are not required to be certified.

**Is a test required to be a certified Early Educator in NC?** No test is currently required to obtain EEC.

**What is the difference between EEC and individual licensure?** EEC is acknowledgement of an individual's verified level of educational achievement, based on a standardized scale. EEC does not issue a personal or teacher license. For

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<sup>1</sup> The Economic Impact of the Child Care Industry in North Carolina, 2008. <http://www.ncsmartstart.org/econimpact/NCEIR08HiRes.pdf>

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**How much does it cost?** EEC is a self-supporting system, which has been created with funding from private and public sources and is now funded primarily by individual fees. EEC fees are aligned with charges required by similar NC professions. The cost for an initial review is \$50. The fee for EEC recertification is \$25, if completed prior to the issued expiration date.

In spring 2009, the North Carolina Office of School Readiness is providing funds to cover the costs of Early Educator Certification of non-licensed More at Four teachers and teacher assistants who work in nonpublic schools. NC Early Educator Certification materials (application and official college or university transcripts) must be mailed by March 1, 2009 to be considered part of the Pilot.

### What is the EEC application process?

Step 1: Complete and sign your application.

Step 2: Attach all official transcripts (for degrees and individual courses) to your application.

Step 3: Make a copy of all materials for your files.

Step 4: Mail to: NC Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development, PO Box 959, Chapel Hill, NC 27514

**What will I get when I am certified?** A personalized EEC card for your wallet and an official certificate (with a gold or silver seal) ready for framing will be sent to you.

**Does my EEC expire?** Your certificate is valid for a period of time based on the amount of education you possess when you become certified. The period ranges from 2 to 5 years dependent on your education level. If you obtain more education in between recertification periods, you may choose to submit your official transcripts to the Institute to increase your EEC level.

**Who is responsible for submitting education information?** Individuals are responsible for submitting documentation of ongoing education.

**Am I required to continue my education for More at Four?** If you are a More at Four lead teacher who has less than a B-K license you are required to be working towards the B-K license. **You must** complete a minimum of 6 semester hours **annually**, as required by the More at Four Program Guidelines. More at Four teachers pursuing licensure or who currently hold NC B-K licensure to meet More at Four program requirements are required to follow professional development requirements as stipulated by the NC Department of Public Instruction teacher licensure policy. Contact OSR TLU for more information (919-981-5382).

**Am I required to continue my education for EEC?** To maintain your EEC, you must continue your education following the guidelines below. EEC requires completion every 2 to 5 years based on the level you are certified.

For **level 5 and below** (Silver Levels), EEC professionals must continue their education at a rate of 6 semester credit hours per certification period. Coursework in any field will be accepted toward the 6 semester hours required for recertification at any level. Early Educators are encouraged to take coursework that will help them achieve a higher EEC level.

For **level 6 and above** (Gold Levels), EEC professionals must complete 6 semester credit hours or 10 continuing education units (CEU) or a combination of the two per certification period. For either **level 9 or 10**, professionals who are certified and who teach in a higher education system may receive credit for teaching rather than having to complete formal coursework.



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